

speaker 1: Welcome to another episode of Robot Overlordz, episode number 97. On the show we take a look at how society is changing, everything from pop culture reviews to political commentary, technology trends to social norms, all in under thirty minutes, every Tuesday and Thursday. I'm Mike Johnston.

speaker 2: And I'm Matt Bolton.

speaker 1: Since we're coming up on our hundredth episode, we'd like to start getting any interested listeners out there more involved in the show. If you've got an idea or a topic that you'd like to be a guest to talk about with us, drop us a line. I'm mike@robotoverlords.com

speaker 2: And I'm matt@robotoverlords.com, and on tonight's episode we would like to talk about a new start-up that's aiming to kill the supermarket. Now I don't really think it's going to. The service is called Farmigo, and what it does is it organizes farmers in your area and then using this program you buy directly from farmers in your area cutting out the grocery store and the middleman. Which is a very cool idea because, A. you're helping local farmers, and B. your getting fresh produce, which is always a good thing. I just think, I don't think it's ever going to replace the supermarket although it may cut down on the produce section and that type of thing, but I can see this expanding to milk, cheese, meat, that type of a thing.

speaker 1: Oh I definitely agree with you on that, Matt. I don't think this is going to kill the supermarket necessarily, but I could see it being a very useful service to have in addition to a supermarket. Like you said, I actually see this killing off those farmer co-ops, or maybe even farmer's markets, because if you could just, sort of, go onto an app or whatever and order what you want, and know that it's local, I would see that as actually more useful. I mean, I've been to the farmer's market a couple of times and to be honest, I didn't really enjoy it particularly. But then I'm not really a person that likes browsing and shopping. I like to go and get my thing and be done.

speaker 2: I'm definitely with you. What I think would be cool and maybe the owners of this thing have thought of this, but if they could figure out a way to work with Peapod. So instead of Peapod carrying the produce, Peapod gets the stuff from the local farmers, and then delivers all the rest of your groceries to your house, so that you know you're getting fresh produce, maybe you can go onto this thing and select a farm, because if you've gotten produce from them before you know they have good produce, so you say, hey, I want to get all my produce from

Bill's Farm, and then Bill's Farm sends it over to Peapod and then they deliver it. I think that would be something that'd be really cool, because then you don't even have to leave your house, where as this thing I don't believe you have to leave your house either. But they're gonna have to.

speaker 1: I think you do, I think you do have to go to a pickup place.

speaker 2: You're right. You're correct. Sorry.

speaker 1: Yeah, I don't know. The only thing I could think of somewhat in reading about this, was a Portlandia skit where it's like the two really radical left people at this restaurant, and they're like, tell me about this chicken, what's the chicken like? And the restaurant has these papers, well he's a heritage bird, and he's been raised this way. And they're asking all these questions, and they're like, we're gonna go check out this farm, and they actually end up joining this cult because they're, the cult leader memorizes them. And then when the cult leader finally dies like five years later, they wake up and they're like, what the hell are we doing here? So then they go back to the restaurant, and then they decide not to order the chicken. It just, the service does somewhat to me, on the surface, seem like it's geared towards quote, unquote, those kind of people, but I do think there's something to be said for the accountability of knowing what's going on on a farm, supporting local business, which I'm all in on, and that aspect of it. And I certainly like the idea of being able to, a little bit of that inventory management, they also mention in the article that you found on Fortune about this is that the percentage that the actual farmer gets is much higher than the grocery store model. Which I gotta say for me, philosophically, I like the idea of the person doing the work getting the bulk of the percentage. I don't begrudge middlemen or percentage, but it just has always to me, in our current, you know in the past system kind of seems like those percentages are weighted the wrong way. The idea that the majority of that percentage is actually going to the farmers, I'm in on that. That sounds cool.

speaker 2: I absolutely, I'm 100% with you on that. Especially when it's a local farmer, it's not a grower out in California, nothing against growers out in California, but we live in the Chicago area, so I'd rather support growers around here. If I can get, you know, there's almost nothing better than fresh sweet corn right off the ear this time of year, it's absolutely perfect. So If I can do that, if I can get that sweet corn, and it's literally less than twenty-four hours since the farmer picks it off the stalk and I'm eating it, and he's making a higher percentage, to me it's a win-win-win, everybody's winning. I'm getting a better price, he's making more money, and I'm getting

fresher produce. To me there's really no downside there.

speaker 1: Yeah, I'd agree with you on that. I think for me I like the idea that it connects you directly, more directly to your food. Because there's something about the supermarket experience, you have no idea where that comes from, no idea what the conditions in the truck were, and for the most part that's not really a huge, hasn't been a super huge issue in this country. But you know, I like that idea of being a little bit more directly connected, but at the same time I don't want the hassle of going to a farmer's market. I have seen exposes and stuff where they've at some times exposed those people as scams, where they go to the supermarket, buy a bunch of food, and then turn around and sell it at like a twenty percent markup at a farmer's market. If Farmigo is able to solve somewhat this kind of situation and establish like a high level of trust, and really prove that chain of authenticity between, that you're connected to the farmer and you're actually getting those conditions, without having to drive out to the farm and join a weird cult, I see a lot of potential for it.

speaker 2: Absolutely. Like I said, I think probably the best thing would be for them to figure out how to, right now if you have to drive to a distribution center, you know part of the problem at least I run into sometimes is, especially with something like this, okay let's say I get all my produce from them but then I still have to go to the grocery store, buy the other things that I buy. So if you could integrate it somehow with Peapod so that I could get literally everything delivered right to my door, and I don't have to drive anywhere, and I don't have to, the main thing is having to drive to multiple locations. To me that's one of the only drawback I see with this is now you're asking people to go to the grocery store but skip the produce section, buy everything else I need, and then drive to this co-op location to pick up your other goods.

speaker 1: Well the author of the Fortune article makes some mention of that, there's this bit about here in the owner of Farmigo's vision if it becomes a reality, in ten years you'll get all your non-perishables from the likes of Amazon, while a service like Farmigo will answer all your fresh needs. Neighborhood stores will act as gap fillers for last minute purchases. So if you suddenly had like a friend come in from out of town and you needed, I don't know, avocado to make fresh guacamole or something like that, you might have to go to the neighborhood store, but for the rest of the time you wouldn't be. It's certainly an interesting model. I guess I'm more interested in maybe, the meat and dairy, personally, than, you know, I don't buy a lot of vegetables, I guess I'll just confess. So in that sense, I like the, like you said, the sweet corn, the Midwest sweet corn at this time of year is awesome. But for the rest of it doesn't particularly impact me, so I don't know that I'm their target market. Unless you said, if they had meat and dairy basically. But the idea of being more connected to my whoever's providing my milk actually, to be honest is really appealing. Especially if you could give them feedback like, please

layoff the antibiotics and stuff like that.

speaker 2: Yeah, like I said, I think it'd be great if you do start finding out a farm that you really like, being able to order from them again, and again. I'm with you, I wish I liked vegetables more than I do, but you know I don't particularly. But if this does expand, and you have dairy, and meat, and poultry, and all these other things. My parents live in Amish country and going to the meat markets up there is completely different than going to the meat markets around here. When I buy chicken up there, you talk to the butcher, he'll tell you, hey, this chicken was running around earlier today, and that's the freshness that you're getting. And it tastes so much better. I think if we could get back to that as oppose to having all these processed foods and all these things, it's so much healthier and better for you. And going back to being able to support somebody local makes it all that much better.

speaker 1: Do you want a heritage bird? Do you want to see his papers?

speaker 2: I do. I just don't want to joint the cult.

speaker 1: Yeah, yeah, me neither. It'll be interesting and I'll be interested to see where it goes. Hopefully they make it to Chicago eventually. It sounds like right now they're in New York and San Francisco. So definitely I think this is one that at some point I hope it comes to Chicago.

speaker 2: Absolutely.

speaker 1: Okay, that's all that for this episode of Robot Overlordz. You can find our show notes and old episodes online at [robotoverlordz with a z.com](http://robotoverlordzwithaz.com). If you have any feedback for us you can email us, I'm mike@robotoverlords.com

speaker 2: And I'm Matt@Robotoverlordz.com

speaker 1: Thanks everyone for listening.

speaker 2: Thanks.